GJ RMP public comment
RAC update/discussion
August 22, 2013
Multiple Use definition (FLPMA)

- Management of the public lands & their various resource values-utilize in the combination that best meets present & future needs of the American people;

- making most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide for periodic adjustments in use-conform to changing needs and conditions;
Multiple Use definition (FLPMA)

- Use of some land for less than all of the resources; combination of balanced & diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g., rec, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values).

- Harmonious & coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land & quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources & not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output.
Sustained yield definition (FLPMA)

- The term “sustained yield” means the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use.
Scope of comments

- 4,000+ comments-emails and letters
- Air quality, recreation, travel management, social/economic analysis, oil and gas, lands with wilderness characteristics main topics of substantial interest
  - State of Colorado, Mesa Co., and EPA-air
  - Detailed comments from public, Mesa and Garfield Counties on travel mgmt.
  - Individual recreationists and COHVCOSoc/econ
Scope of Comments (cont)

- Individual oil and gas operators-detailed, specific comments on oil and gas stips, leasing, protections for soil/water/air/wildlife
- Detailed comments on lands with wilderness characteristics, including ground-truthed inventory comments by wilderness society
- Lengthy comment letters from Mesa County, COHVCO, others
Process-Comment Analysis

- Submitted every letter/email (4,000 +) to contractor
- Contractor reviews each letter and extracts substantive and non-substantive comments
- Enters into database
- Prepared draft comment report
- Provides BLM with database and scanned copies of all letters
Examples of non-substantive comments

- The best Alternative is B (or A, C, D....)
- I want the EIS to reflect the following: no logging, grazing, drilling, mining...
- Do not add any more restrictions
- More areas should be available for multiple uses

(Without reasons stated for the preference)
Comment Summary - Substantive

- Three broad topics:
  - National Environmental Policy Act (covers general, purpose and need, alternatives, baseline info, impacts, mitigation, and resource-specific comments)
  - Federal Land Policy and Management Act (consistency, multiple use, issues and planning criteria, planning process)
  - Edits
Comment review

- Non-substantive comments will be summarized and reviewed
- Substantive comments will be compiled, summarized, and included in the report BLM will use to develop the proposed
- Planning team lead and Field Manager to do preliminary review each comment against range of alternatives then interdisciplinary work/discussion
Comment Review

- Depending on degree of change and how different the impacts would be from the current Preferred, planning to develop a new Preferred alternative
- Changes may also include improving information in EIS (e.g., updating impacts or affected environment)
- Some comments simply require response/clarification/explanation
Status

- Draft summary report provided to BLM
- BLM reviewed report and requested changes
  - More full incorporation of comments from coop agencies
- Travel management comments will be part of comment database (don’t have these yet)-significant effort by local individuals and groups (forums etc)
Process/NEPA/Document

- Parts of the RMP are too specific, consider the least specific management possible
- Clarify the role of humans in the environment
- Recognize and adopt newly developed community master and comprehensive plans-Fruita, Palisade, Delta, GH, updated Mesa County plan, local sage-grouse plans
Air Quality

- Questions about how WEST CARMMMs modeling will be incorporated
- Detailed comments on baseline, mitigation, impacts from EPA, Mesa County, and Colorado Dept. of Public Health and the Environment-focus on ozone, PM10
- Questions on BLM’s authority re: air stipps
Fish and wildlife

- Questions about NSOs for hookless cactus, restrictions for Debeque phacelia
- Increase NSOs based on site-specific NEPA
- Master Leasing Plans (BLM is currently working to integrate master leasing plan info into the document vs. appendix) (Shale Ridges of particular interest)
- Use National Technical Team recommendations for sage-grouse
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

- Questions on BLM’s authority to identify areas with wilderness characteristics
- Wilderness Society completed in-field review of our inventory and submitted detailed comments
- Use different management prescriptions for different areas
- More focus on the northern Dolores
Energy and Minerals

- Range of alternatives too narrow - increased restrictions in each alternative, BLM should make an effort to decrease impediments
- Technical suggestions regarding coal-EIS will be updated with these
- Consider “demonstration project” around Roan Creek/Carr Creek-opportunities to coordinate private/public development
Recreation

- Consider more alternatives—more different kinds of recreation in Bangs Canyon, Castle Rock, Palisade area, North Fruita Desert
- Clarify implementation procedures for Special Recreation Permits
- More clarification on future shooting ranges—develop proactive approach
  - Unreasonable to require cleanup of clay targets
  - Agree with broad “open unless closed” approach but also recommend developed ranges
Recreation (cont)

- Palisade proposal-option of “epic descent” mountain bike riding opportunity in conjunction with Grand Mesa
- Keep backcountry airstrips open
- Effects of overcrowding on trails-is supply adequate for current and future use?
Recreation (cont)

- Comments reveal complexity of recreational interests in this area
  - Motorized-includes singletrack motorcycle, trials motorcycle, hill climb/dirtbiking, ATV, jeeping......
  - Hang-gliding and backcountry airplanes
  - “Quiet use”-mtn bikes, horseback, on and off-trail hiking opportunities
- Diversity of desires-in some cases, all looking for specific experience
Travel Management

- Set aside Zone L (North Desert) until a collaborative travel plan can be developed by stakeholders working with BLM
- Detailed comments from Mesa and Garfield Counties regarding historic routes
- Other comments all route-by-route, will be considered after allocations are updated/considered
Discussion topic- Zone L

- Zone L and travel- John Potter headed up a group called “Friends of Zone L” - may be appropriate for sub-group work
  - Is there interest/value in ongoing working group approach?
- Level of interaction needed by BLM may indicate sub-group would be appropriate if desired
Travel Management

- Garfield County has undertaken research of historic routes
  - Asks BLM to show historic routes across private land, leave BLM routes open behind private land pending ability to prove public access
  - BLM doesn’t want to encourage trespass-grayed out these routes and propose closed or administrative designations
Travel Management (cont)

- Mesa County—considering recreation as a value that the county is interested in, more fully today—significantly expanded routes noted as important to Mesa County
  - County undertook hearings and conveyed comments from the public about travel management (and rec, oil and gas, ag)
  - County heard strongly from motorized use advocates and comments reflect that focus
Travel Management (cont)

- Additional work with Mesa County through coop agency relationship with BLM
  - Coordination/clarification needed to understand Mesa County’s position, share information on specific travel management areas
  - Understand new/restated position on areas of recreational importance
Wild and Scenic

- Finding only 11.53 miles of the Dolores eligible out of all rivers running through BLM is not a balanced approach
  - Delay a suitability finding pending additional stakeholder involvement
- Additional input on stakeholder comments
Impacts

- Social and Economic - lots of focus on recreation
  - Many users feel the EIS undervalues recreation expenditures
  - Economists - assumptions on portion of all recreation spending that can be attributed to BLM? Role of local spending?
  - Differences in how we displayed data - can be fixed
  - Interest in economic role of recreation more specific/important in GJ given amt. of public lands
Clarify assumptions, esp. regarding local expenditures and link between BLM and recreation spending
Include qualitative (at least) mention of the importance of recreation, public lands
Clarify analysis so that expenditures are grouped in a more comparable way
Pursue a more detailed, specific socio-economic analysis of the importance of public lands in Mesa County—work with partners (Mesa Co? COHVCO?)
Soc/Econ discussion (cont)

- Understand its important to recreationists to know that we understood the full scope of economic impact from recreation.
- Recreation critical link in a diverse economy.
- FLPMA-multiple use and sustained yield-give consideration to the relative values of resources and not necessarily to combo of uses that will give greatest economic return or greatest unit output.
Impacts (cont)

- Requests for additional evaluation of effects of stips on development
- Questions on how RMP guidelines affect existing leases
Questions?